India becoming home of the Largest HIV Carriers by the Turn of the Century

487. DR. B.B DUTTA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that about three million Indians are infected with the AIDS Virus;

(b) whether it is also a fact that according to experts, 20 to 50 million Indians will be infected by the turn of this century making India home of the largest population of HIV carriers;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) details of steps taken to control the spread of AIDS in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. It is a guess estimate.

(d) In order to prevent and control the spread of HIV/AIDS in India, a comprehensive programme is currently under implementation as a centrally sponsored scheme throughout the country. The strategies of the programme consist of generation of awareness among high risk behaviour group and general public about HIV/AIDS, control of Sexually Transmitted Diseaes, Blood Safety and rational use of blood, surveillance; and care and support of HIV/AIDS cases.

Losses suffered by Indian Airlines and Air India

488. SHRI SANJAY DALMIA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 1018 given in the Rajya Sabha on 23rd July, 1996 and state:

(a) the reasons for losses suffered by IA and AI and the routes on which loss is being incurred; and

(b) the concrete steps taken or proposed to be taken by Government to meet the loss and to make them profitable?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) Air India incurred losses during 1995-96 due to increase in expenditure on account of interest and depreciation on new aircraft, reduction in yield due to increased competition, increased landing, handling and navigational charges, agitation by engineers depreciation of rupee value etc. Losses are incurred on operations to the Continent, Canada UK, Africa and freighter operations to USA and Singapore.

Indian Airlines has been incurring losses due to grounding of A320 fleet, entry of private airlines on trunk routes, exodus of pilots etc. Indian Airlines has been incurring losses on routes connecting stations in North East region, Jammu and Kashmir and Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

(b) Air India and Indian Airlines are taking steps to improve their product, image and on time performance to attract more passengers and to increse revenue.

Suspension of an Engineer of a Private Airlines by DGCA

489. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Director-General Civil Aviation recently suspended an engineer of a private airline;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) what steps have been taken to ensure safety of passengers of private airlines; and

(d) the reasons for not taking any action against the management for slacking the safety requirements?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) States taken to ensure safety of passengers are as under:—

(i) Scrutiny of maintenance and operational practices of the operator by the Safety Audit team of DGCA.

(ii) Periodic surveillance checks of maintenance facilities of various operators by DGCA.

(iii) Monitoring of Cockpit Voice Recorder and Flight Data Recorder readouts of various aircraft to ensure standard safety norms.

(iv) Monitoring of the in-flight procedures followed by flight crew by Flight Inspection Directorate of DGCA.

(v) A hundred percent safety audit of all aircraft operated by private airlines by DGCA.

(d) DGCA has taken action against personnel and management for violation of laid down rules and procedures.

Tourism Related Projects Sanctioned by Central and State Governments

490. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the tourism related projects sanctioned by the centre and the State Governments during 1995 and 1996 (till date);

(b) which of these sanctioned projects are under execution and the names of the States where these projects have been taken up;

(c) the 8th plan allocation for the development of tourism in the country and what is the actual expenditure incurred on the development of tourism stating the names of the projects on which the expenditure has been incurred; and

(d) the existing incentives to the private sector for promotion of tourism in the country and whether Government propose to review its policy to attract private sector in the tourism industry?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): (a) and (b) The Department of Tourism provides financial assistance to the State/Union Territory Governments for promotion of tourism under various schemes which include construction of tourist bungalows, tourist complexes, wayside amenities, tourist reception centres and yatri niwases. In addition, assistance is provided for the refurbishment and beautification of the precincts near the monuments and heritage sites and adventure tourism activities. Publicity support and assistance for promotion of fairs and festivals are provided to the State Governments.

In 1995-96 and 1996-97 (till date) the Department has supported 194 projects estimated at 3356.81 lakhs. These projects are at various stages of execution by the State Governments.

(c) The 8th plan allocation for the Department of Tourism was 440 crores and the actual expenditure incurred in the first four years by the Department, till date, is 352.15 crores.

(d) The Government of India provides various incentives and benefits to private sector such as Interest Subsidy to One, Two and Three Star Category Hotels on loans taken from financial institutions and benefits under the Income Tax Act 1964. In addition, various State Government also provide incentives to the private sector for promotion of tourism in the country.

Efforts to Boost Tourism in Assam

491. SHRI PARAG CHALIHA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state the details of efforts if any that are being taken/initiated/contemplated to boost tourism in Assam?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): To boost tourism in Assam, the Department of Tourism on behalf of the State Government has sponsored a prepa-